

REMARKS

Claims 1-44 are pending in the instant application. At the outset, Applicant gratefully acknowledges the allowance of claims 30 and 40-44, and indication of allowable subject matter in claims 2-5, 7-9, 12-15, 17-19, 22-25, 27-29, 32-35 and 37-39. In the Office Action, claims 1, 6, 10-11, 16, 20-21, 26, 31 and 36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,594,499 to Andersen, et al. (hereinafter, "Andersen"). The Office Action also objects to the title as non-descriptive.

By the above amendment, the title has been revised to more fully describe the invention. This amendment is offered to advance prosecution, and is not necessary to the patentability of the claims. It should not be interpreted to limit the scope of the claims in any way. Favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection is kindly requested.

On the merits of the claims, Applicant respectfully traverses on the grounds that Andersen is not prior art to the instant application. The instant application claims the benefit under 35 U.S.C. § 119 of Japanese Application No. 2000-198059, filed 30 June 2000. The claim of priority and receipt of the certified priority document was acknowledged in the most recent Office Action. Andersen is effective as a reference under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) only as of its filing date, 25 September 2000, nearly three months later than the priority date of the present application.

In perfection of Applicant's claim of priority, filed herewith is a verified translation of the Japanese priority document, under 37 C.F.R. § 1.55(a)(4).

In light of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection has been obviated, and kindly requests favorable reconsideration and withdrawal. Applicant further

submits that all claims define patentable subject matter, and kindly solicit an early indication of allowability of all claims.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David J. Torrente", with a stylized flourish at the end.

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Enclosures: (Verified Translation of Japanese Priority Document)